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# JOURNEY MAP REPORT JULY 2023



**HANDS UP  
MALLEE**

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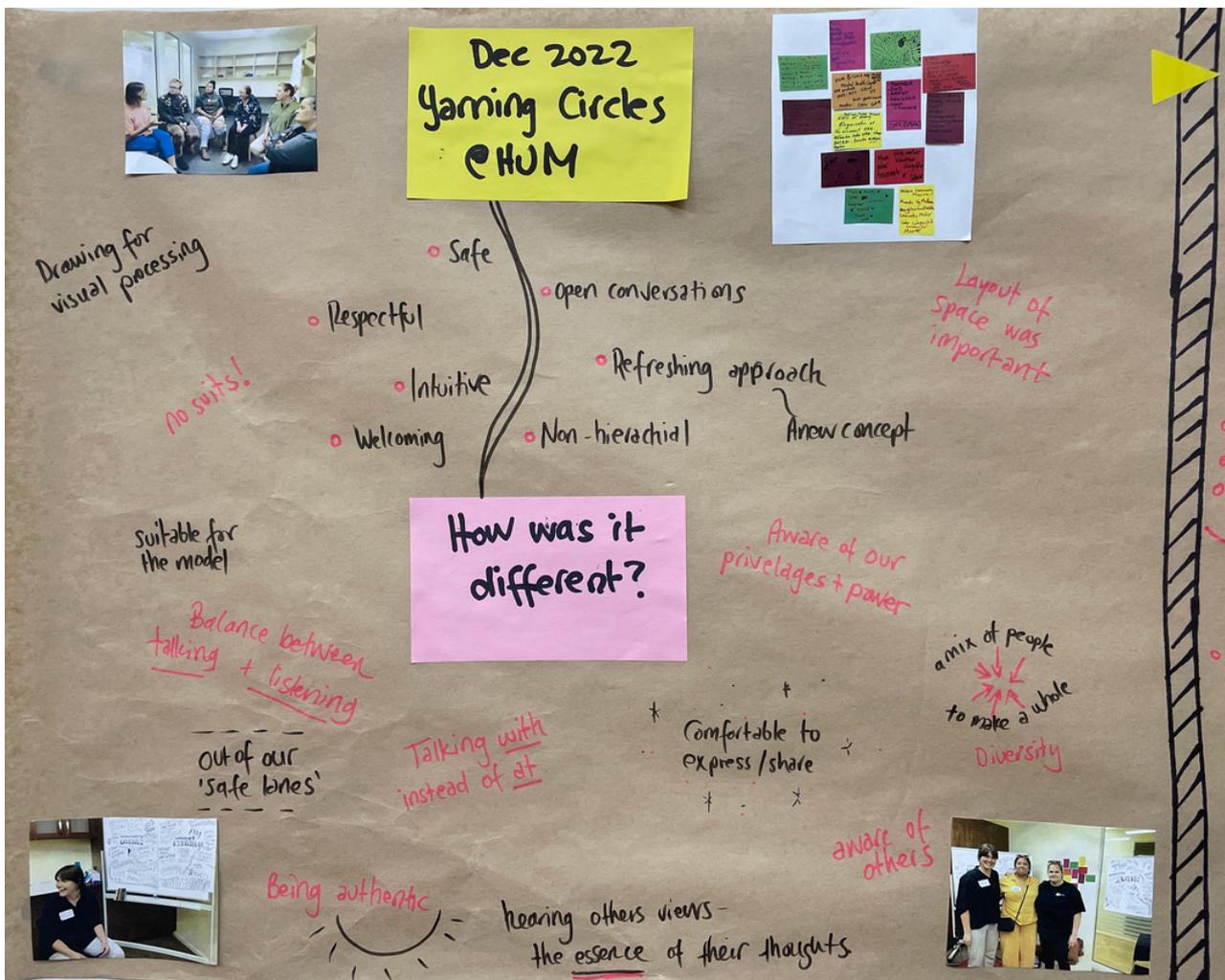
Collaborative  
Governance  
Group

In July 2023, six members of the Hands Up Mallee (HUM) Collaborative Governance Group members were interviewed one on one by the project's independent facilitator from Regenerative Communities.

We mapped a journey of the project, starting from recruitment to the present. This report outlines the findings, and will be included in a final evaluation report for the project.

# RECRUITMENT

In December 2022, three members of the original Collaborative Governance co-design group, alongside the independent facilitator designed a recruitment process to attract new members to the governance group. Wanting to avoid a traditional approach, we opted for a 'Yarning Circle'



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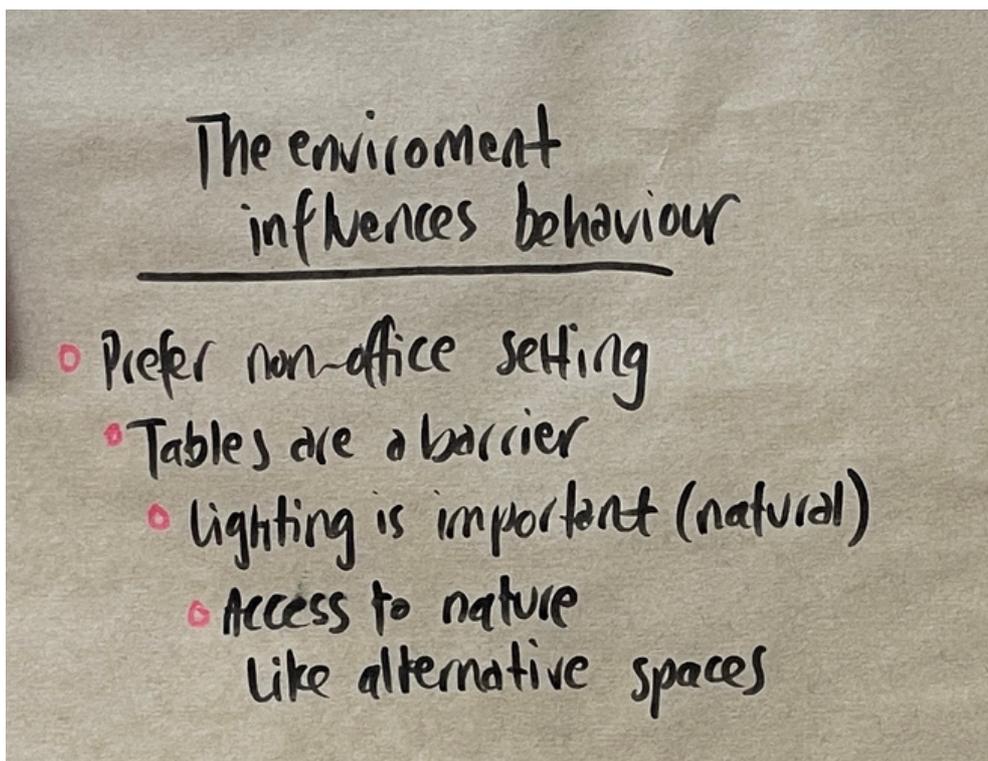
Expressions of interest were advertised throughout community where we asked people what they can 'give' to the group and what they hope to 'get.'

The Yarning Circle was an informal environment, with a series of facilitated activities and questions that aimed to foster discussion that would show how potential new members engaged in a group, and what motivated them to apply. Topics included shared values, lived experience, and community concerns.

The new members were selected using an intuitive process of discussing the strengths of each applicant. We then looked at how they worked with others, and their diverse perspectives and lived experiences, to choose a balanced final group.

Everyone received a personal phone call with their positive feedback and notification. During these calls we received a lot of great feedback about how comfortable they felt and how enjoyable the session was.

### **Key finding: The environment we are in and how we set up the space is important**



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**Q: How did you find the recruitment process? What made it different/ a new approach to governance?**

*It was awesome because it gave people a chance to say what they thought about values, community concerns, community experience. It's a new way of doing things - jumping out of our safe lanes of interviewing with structure. You can really pick up where people's values are sitting and the way that they are thinking.*

*I think what made it different was because it was a chat. I think I was less self-conscious and probably more authentic, because I wasn't presenting myself. When you are aware of other people in the same process as you, I try to be conscious of the speaking and listening. I try to be conscious of who's contributing and who hasn't been heard.*

*It was a really comfortable space to feel like you could say what you wanted to say. If you're wanting to hear the essence of what people are wanting to say, and for the purpose of what we're doing and for community, I think that's the best way to do it. It's that open conversations that you could have, expressing yourself was the thing that happened quite easily.*

*As a person, and an engaged community member, I felt very welcomed and safe in participating. This is a bit of a different governance group. This whole process is seeing more of the humanity in each of the participants. I've been able to sit there in the moment and listen to each individual person that's offered their thoughts or experiences, and there's a lot more empathy.*

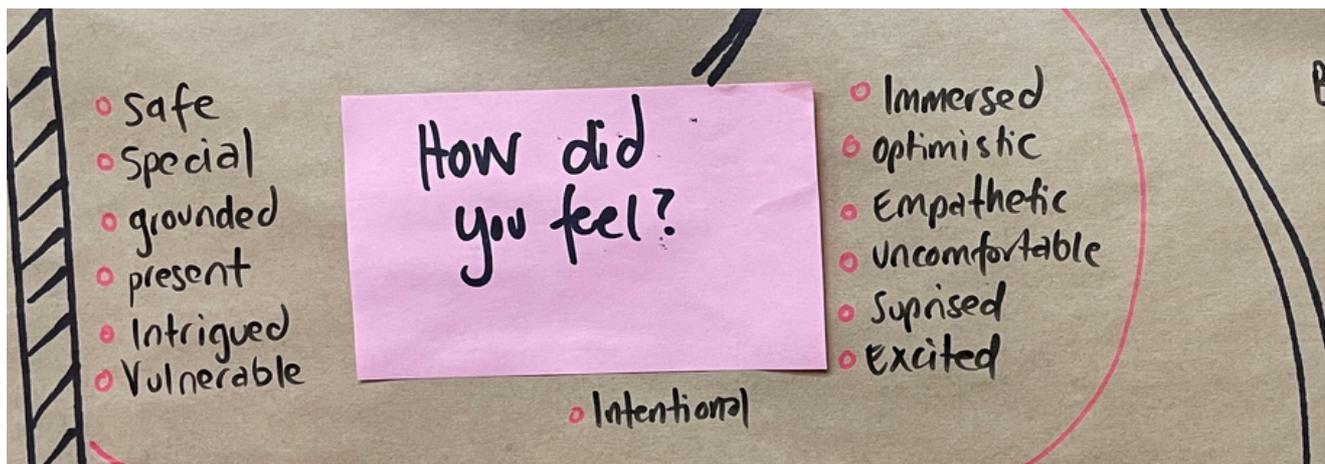
# WORKSHOP

We started off 2023 with a full day workshop in which all new members attended, along with the EO of HUM. The workshop was held at a local property with extensive native gardens. The independent facilitator designed a day which included

-Grounding/reflective activities such as walking, meditation, collective reading and movement.

-Using a regenerative framework of Will, Being and Function to build a foundation for the governance model

## Q How did you feel at the start? How did the workshop set up your expectations for the project?



*I felt really optimistic. I felt okay, this is this is a different way of doing business. I felt vulnerable, kind of uncomfortable at first with the meditations. But I have opened my mind and I think that was very good. I actually surprisingly found it useful.*

*I felt really special, because you got someone cooking for you and you got to walk around a beautiful place. It was a really safe space I think. A really good mechanism for people to get to know each other, it was on a different kind of level. In a way, it taught me to step back and to slow down.*

## Getting to know each other:

- Seeing our humanity
- building empathy
- being generous + vulnerable
- A new way of connecting
  - skipping the small talk - going deep



Building  
before

A strong part of the day was the importance of an activity or a deliberate division from how you arrive, and then the work you do. And it takes time, but it's valuable time because then you present fully. I didn't feel distracted on the day. I was immersed in the day. And I'm sure that was in part those activities that really brought us to our attention deeply to here and now. So it was very, very valuable.

I went in with no expectations, but at the same time, what I experienced was not something I would have expected. It was a totally new way of getting to know a group of people. The whole thing was stopping that small talk that would normally happen, and was just getting into the real nitty gritty. The generosity that everybody and courtesy that everybody showed each other allowed for that deep connection to be made straightaway.

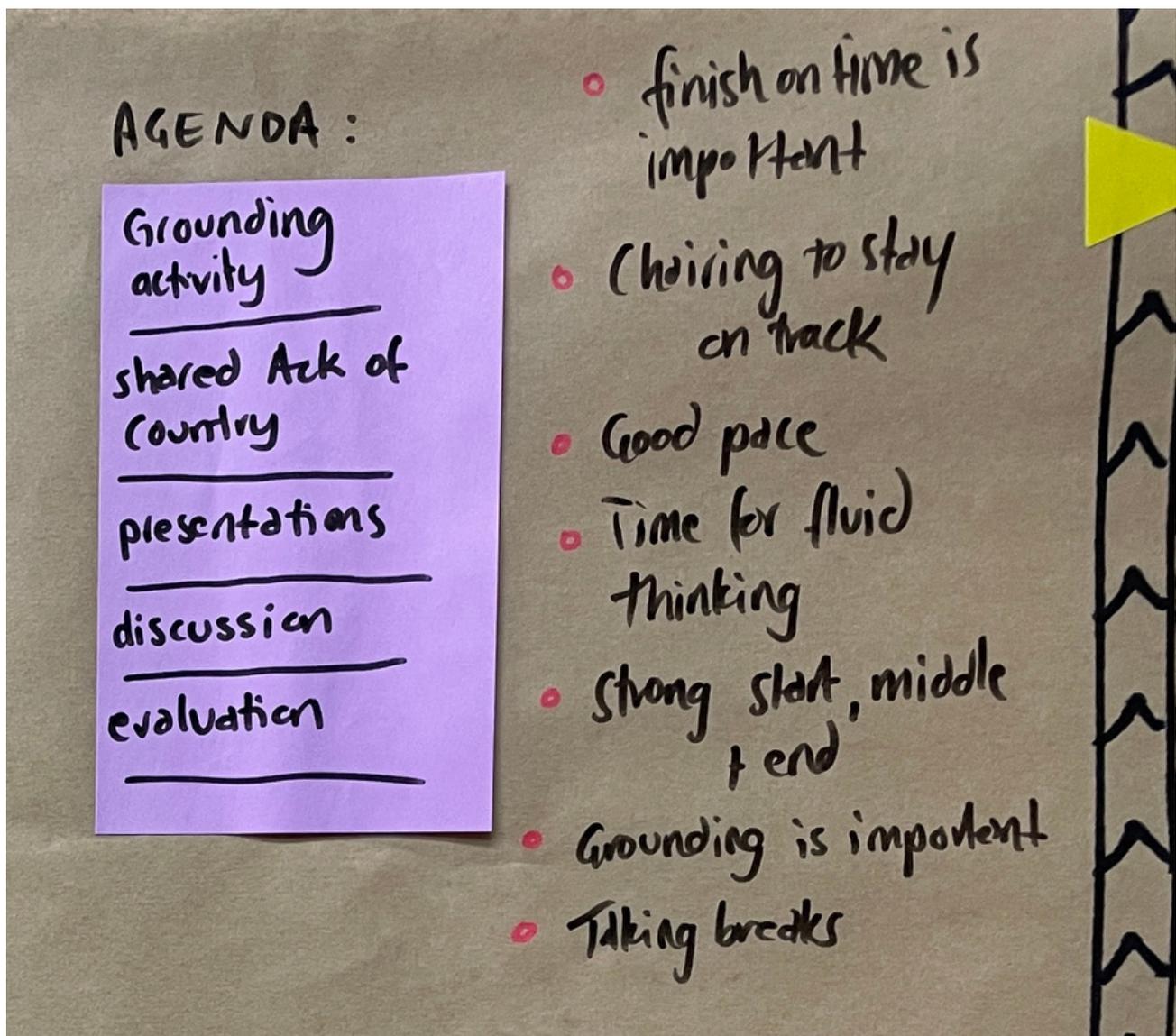
# MEETINGS

We then begun our monthly meetings. We decided as a group that they would be once a month, for 2 hours, with some additional commitments or optional activities on top of that.

We aimed to use alternative meeting venues, create a comfortable space and have good snacks.

Our format is to arrive 15 minutes early to chat and settle in. We share the responsibility of acknowledging Country by taking turns. The first and 15 minutes at the start of the meeting is dedicated to a grounding activity.

We also allocated time at the end of each meeting to ensure we evaluate.



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## Q What has your experience of meetings been?

*It's important to see how it all works, all that information from the Backbone and all the different work, and that's quite inspiring really to see how much HUM does and, and to be a part of that is quite honouring. It was good was good to see how you go about it (decision making) because I've never been a part of something like that before... And it was good because it was collaborative.*

*We discussed that there has been a significant amount of information to receive and learn, and big discussions to be had. Having someone who chairs the meeting efficiently is really important.*

*I think one thing is the environment, that is the group, and the way it's run is very much open to alternative solutions. Not rushing the solution, letting it stew for a bit, which often you don't get in other scenarios. And I think you're only going to come up with a better outcome, if you get to stew over it for a period of time.*

*It feels like they all start off quite slow. But it's getting into that right frame of mind that then we tend to get a lot of things done, or spoken about, because we're in that in that fluid space where we're bouncing ideas off of each other. There needs to be a start, middle and end. And we often jumped to the end really quickly. So it's been good to be in the start space. And also not rush out of it.*

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# PURPOSE

Developing an alternative governance approach from traditional styles comes with unknowns and challenges that take time to work through. HUM itself is a unique initiative with different needs to other organisations.

## Q Do you think our purpose is clear?

*I think we're still in a learning stage. Am I contributing to Governance? How would I be a critical mind in this setting? Maybe the role is just to be there as a safety net for HUM. It's the opportunity to flesh things out and for people to ask questions. But it still feels like we're receiving.. nothing arrives uncooked.*

*Not necessarily. But I don't think that's a bad thing. I think what needs to be discussed is discussed. And I think, like I said, if we don't come up with the answer, that's okay. But once again, it's a new group. And I think we're all still kind of finding our feet.*

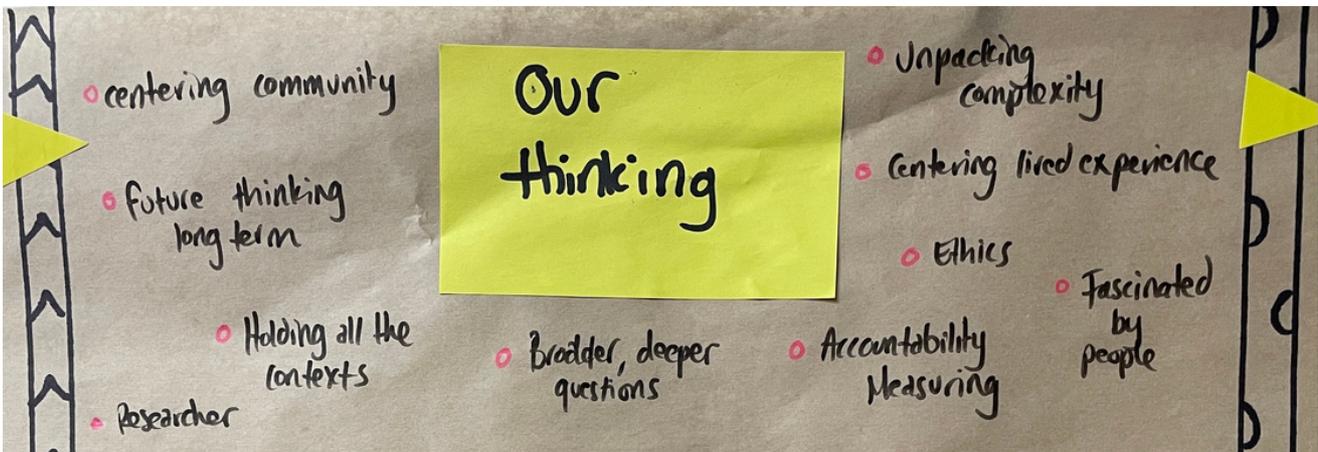
## Key finding: still in the formation stage

*It's really taken six months to feel that I have an understanding of what I've joined. But it's been a very awesome process, right from the yarning circle the whole way through. Like, I've never felt inadequate, I've never felt that I didn't have a right to, to speak up or that I didn't have something to add. It would be good to know our tenure. It's almost like once we get to the end of the first year, that's when our time should start, because this process is just sort of building up to the next stage.*

# OUR THINKING

At the end of each meeting, each member writes down a question that they are holding from the meeting- a key reflection, or a question they would like to keep alive throughout this process.

During the interviews, we used these questions to reflect on how their thinking has been developing/changed, and if their ways of thinking are supported and their questions explored.



## Q How are we thinking? Is your way of thinking supported in this space?

*Getting yourself in the right frame of mind to make those decisions... Let's look at this from a different perspective, let's use a different train of thought compared to your day to day life. it's a bit more of a different space and different thinking, which I think in the long term will be a far better outcome.*

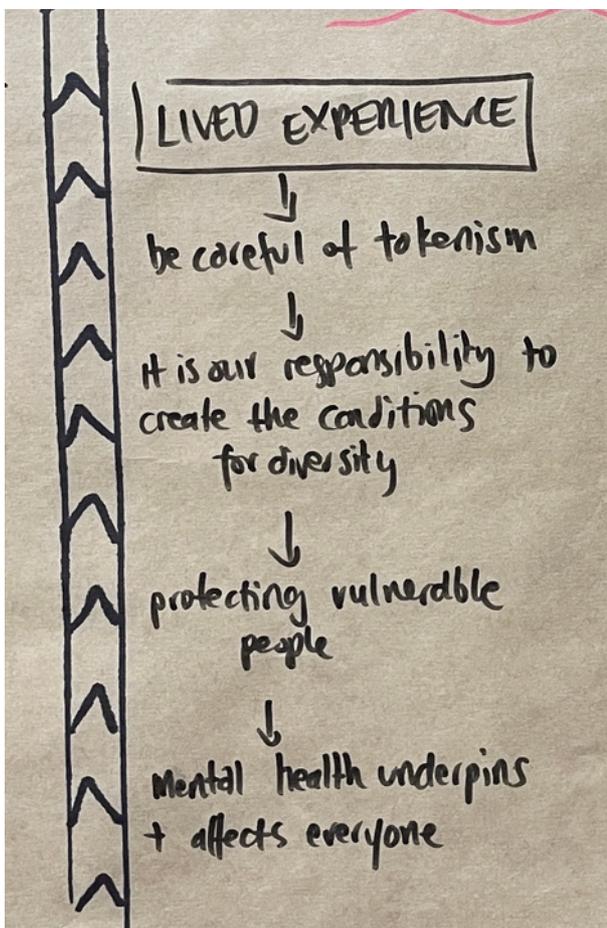
*The things we're thinking about and the projects that are being presented through HUM is expanding my understanding of the community. I feel excited and despondent. How is it that the same old way of doing it has such traction, you know, has such authority? why are we so rigid or fixed on things that we all know don't work*

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## Key finding: Capacity building

*It builds people in their skills, so they can move forward in their own kind of work and realm, they can feel a lot more comfortable in their skin, to do other things for community. It's a good chance to mould people to be those community leaders.*

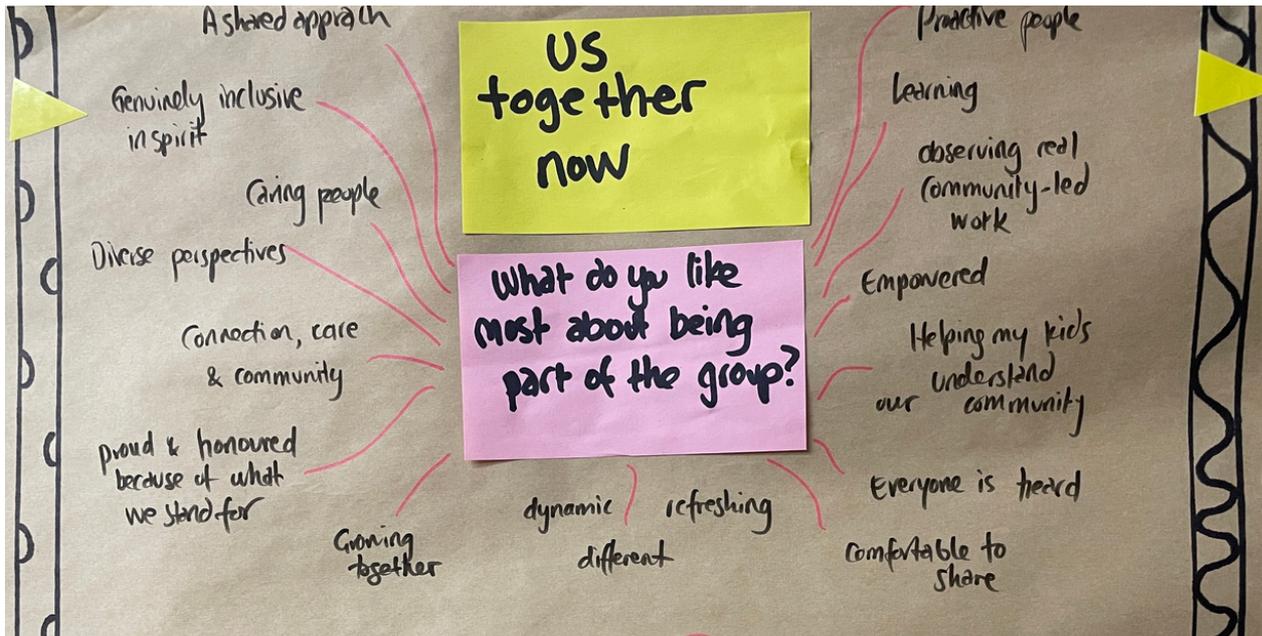
*It's a nice opportunity to provide, when people to sit on something to have personal growth, to have your role in the community considered in this way, as opposed to just turning to up meetings. Even just for people to think about a few questions at the end of the meeting.*



*It's about empowering the individual in the group. Why are we doing it this way? There was someone who made a decision to do it this way. So you can be that person to change it again.*

# US, TOGETHER, NOW

There is something unique about these people, coming together at this particular time, in this particular place. We all give something special and receive in return.



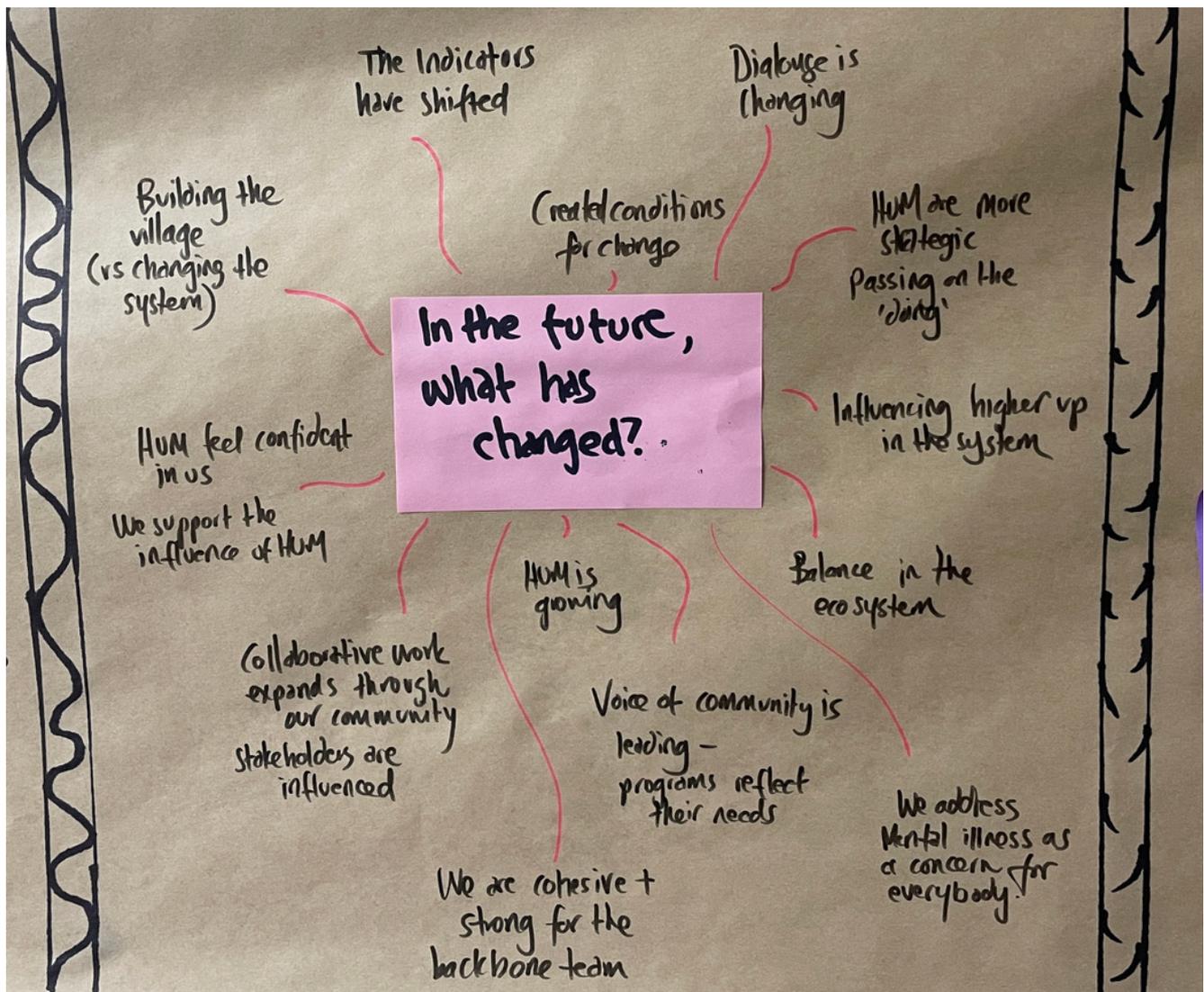
## Q What do you like most about being a part of the group?

*It's just a different dynamic. The way it operates is different to what I'm used to, which is refreshing. It is a different way of learning or looking at things. What do I get from the group, to be honest, is that there's a sense of calm, it's kind of a bit of a refuge. It's been nice to be a part of the journey and learn a different way, which often doesn't happen in this day and age.*

*I like that no matter where you come from, we're all heard. I feel quite honoured to be part of the group and I think it's because what the group stands for. I love that I can say I'm a part of a group that are moving forward by listening to what the community need. We are actually and listening and saying okay, this is what they need to make change in the best interest of them.*

# THE POTENTIAL

We discussed the future, and what we hope will have changed as a result of the group working together to support HUM. We imaged how things look and what the group will have done to support those changes. We wanted to capture the potential of the group, to help us stay connected to our will.



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**Q Image the group in 12 months time. What has changed?  
What is the potential?**

*I think it would be great to see tentacles in a lot more far reaching places that can bring people together and organisations together to have outcomes. It would be great to for HUM to become far more strategic than it is. Because unfortunately, it keeps dancing between hands on and strategic. And that's only because other groups are coming in and out of the conversation all the time rather than staying in the conversation. So it's very hard to have a higher level of thinking when you're still trying to organise the bus.*

*Our community needs that balance in the ecosystem. Because our ecosystem is not working. When we talk about stakeholders, and when we talk about things happening, there are shared resources. I feel HUM, as a Backbone team is a really good driver for change, you know, for that to happen. Because we're always going to come back that it's the voice of the community that's leading.*

*How do we get the voices of people who maybe are carrying more, are more impacted by difficulties in the community or removed from the mainstream? Maybe they're going to be the harder people to support to stay with us. I think about my own life, and it's stable, and I've got flexibility, that in itself means that I'm able to stay on board but it also limits the lens I bring to the group. What would make it easier for people, what would support them?*